

~~Top Secret~~

USSR-POLAND: Soviet Banking Tactics

Moscow in late December reportedly instructed Soviet-owned banks chartered abroad to create contingency reserve accounts to guard against a possible Polish default. The Poles owed these banks more than \$300 million by midyear, but the Foreign Trade Bank of the USSR apparently assumed more than \$200 million of this debt during the fall.

Comment: While the reported instruction may simply reflect concern over Western regulatory requirements, it also suggests Soviet pessimism about Poland's ability to resolve its financial problems. The Foreign Trade Bank's apparent assumption of most of the Polish debt owed to these Soviet-owned banks puts them in a stronger position to weather a possible Polish default.

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